



What is the Statewide Community-Focused Court Planning Initiative?

On May 13–15, 1998, the Judicial Council of California, the policy setting body for the state court system, chaired by California Supreme Court Chief Justice Ronald M. George, with financial assistance provided by the State Justice Institute, sponsored the first-ever statewide community-focused court planning conference. This conference was developed to respond to two of the most significant challenges currently facing the courts in California:

1. renewing public trust and confidence in our judicial system, and
2. strengthening the independence of the judiciary by improving the ability of the courts to plan for and determine the future direction of local court systems.

"The courts need to engage in effective statewide planning so that they can not only be responsive to the communities they serve, but also ensure equal access to justice statewide."

Hon. Ronald M. George
Chief Justice

County Court Planning Teams. The conference, entitled *Courts and Their Communities: Local Planning and the Renewal of Public Trust and Confidence*, was attended by county court planning teams from 57 of the 58 counties in California. Teams were comprised of judges, court administrators, local county government representatives, local bar representatives, and members of the public. These teams were charged with the challenge of leading the countywide community-focused court strategic planning effort in their home counties.



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Local Community-Focused Court

Planning. The county court planning teams were trained in the Five-Step Community-Focused Court Planning Model. They were charged to return to their counties and institute planning in their county courts by:

- opening a local dialogue about community needs and court system improvements, and
- working directly with the leadership of the courts to institute planning in all parts of the courts.

"During my visits to the courts in all 58 counties of California, I frequently met not only with local judges and court executives, but also with members of the local bar and representatives of local government. I was deeply touched and strongly encouraged by the deep and abiding commitment to improving the administration of justice that I witnessed at every stop and in every segment of the community. This [initiative] is an excellent avenue for harnessing some of the enthusiasm and innovation that I directly experienced at the community level."

Hon. Ronald M. George

Benefits of Community Involvement.

There are significant benefits that the courts and their communities will realize by undertaking this court planning effort. By providing a forum in which court users inform the courts about their interests and needs, the courts encourage discussions that uncover shared objectives and give courts a clearer view of the impact of their practices on the public. In return, the public gains a better understanding of the importance of community participation through jury service, volunteer programs, and other avenues of public involvement — and of the essential role that a strong and independent court system plays in our society.

Additional information on the Community-Focused Court Planning Initiative can be found at:
www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/community.
Included on this Website is contact information for all county teams.

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